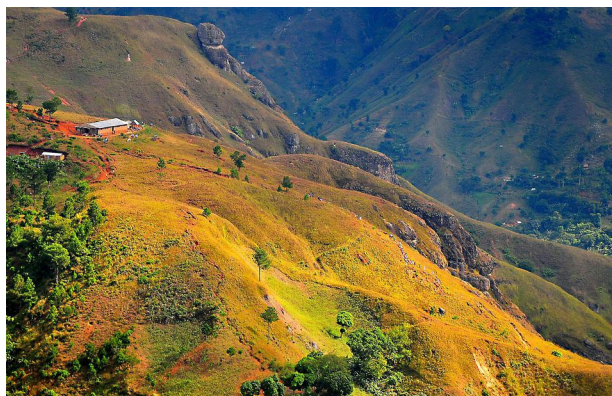


# THE U.S. OCCUPATION OF HAITI: BACKGROUND



Haiti, located on the island of Hispaniola, established itself as the first independent Black republic in 1804. Following the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804, the first and only successful revolt from enslaved people in the modern era, the world was forever changed. This revolutionary event spurred knowledge about Black liberation, instilled fear in white slaveholders, and even led to France's decision to sell its Louisiana territory.



Haitians formed their own system of government. Elites and the Black Haitian military created new political and economic policies for the liberated citizens. This government was also tasked with running a country that other countries did not believe in. Due to the racist ideologies of European and American governments, Haiti was unable to trade with or receive substantial aid from other countries, despite being exploited by these same countries.

France, Germany, and the United States were the countries with the greatest interest in controlling Haiti. France, the former imperial colonizer of Haiti, sought to make Haiti pay for the rebellion. The French government required Haiti to pay them for the Haitian Rebellion, even though Haiti was a sovereign state. To add to this situation, they loaned Haiti the money for this, but put extremely high interest on it, causing Haiti to have to unjustly pay France even more money. Furthermore, France used gunboat diplomacy and threats from the military to force Haitians into paying. Germany also had a long presence in Haiti; in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they held a large business interest in the Caribbean that threatened other imperial nations. The United States sought to spread democracy and gain power in Central and Latin America. Its administrations routinely interfered with elections, legislation, and wars in these nations. They claimed to have a "moral duty," but at the root, they took all forms of economic and political domination for their own interests.

Following more than 100 years of independence and interference, Haiti was occupied by the U.S. for nearly two decades, starting in 1915.

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